



State of Washington

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

Mailing Address: 600 Capitol Way N - Olympia, Washington 98501-1091 - (360) 902-2200, TDD (360) 902-2207

Main Office location: Natural Resources Building - 1111 Washington Street SE - Olympia, WA

DETERMINATION OF NONSIGNIFICANCE (DNS)

Name of Proposal: SINLAHEKIN WILDLIFE AREA FUEL REDUCTION AND FIRE REGIME RESTORATION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Description of Proposal: This project is the first phase in an effort to restore ecologically appropriate fire, on a landscape scale, to the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area fire-dependent ecosystem. Primary goals of this project are: 1) to reduce and/or reconfigure the, historically-uncharacteristic, accumulation of fuels by thinning, pruning, piling and burning; and 2) using prescribed fire to restore ecologically appropriate fire to the landscape. The project will begin implementation of the recently completed Sinlahekin Fuels Reduction and Fire Regime Restoration Plan and will compliment ongoing cooperative efforts with the Bureau of Land Management and US Forest Service whose lands respectively intermingle and adjoin the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area.

This project will include an estimated

- 800-1,000 acres of fuels reduction (hand thinning, ground based mechanical and helicopter)
- 400 acres of seeding
- 1,800-2,000 acres of prescribe burning
- enhanced weed monitoring and weed control in areas thinned to reduce fuels.

This is the first phase of the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area (SWA) Fuels Reduction and Fire Restoration Plan involves projects that will restore the sustainability, functionality, productivity and resiliency to the landscape so that fire can be used as a tool to maintain this fire-dependent ecosystem. Additional phases will occur as grant funding becomes available that would entail similar thinning and burning on the other portions of the Wildlife Area. A set of burn plans has been created that covers the entire SWA, which would be burned over a ten-year cycle. If the plan is fully implemented, out of a total area of 14,370 acres in the SWA, 5,659 acres have planned burns on them with 2,588 acres in conifer forests that may also require mechanical treatment. Fuels will be reduced on another 2,716 acres of coniferous forest via hand, mechanical or helicopter thinning only. Future SEPA reviews will occur for other phases if and when they are funded.

Proponent/Applicant:

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Dale Swedberg, Wildlife Area Manager
1680 Sinlahekin Road
P.O. Box C
Loomis, WA 98827

Location of Proposal, including street, if any: The Sinlahekin Wildlife Area is located in North-Central Washington, about 2.5 miles south of Loomis, Okanogan County, primarily within

the Sinlahekin Valley. The worksite is, generally that portion of WDFW owned lands north of Blue Lake.

Section 13-14, 23-26, 34-36, Township 38 North, Range 25 East WM

Section 2&3, 9-11, 15&16, and 21&22, Township 37 North, Range 25 East WM

Lead Agency: Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)

WDFW has determined that this proposal will likely not have a significant adverse impact on the environment. Therefore, state law¹ does not require an environmental impact statement (EIS). WDFW made this determination of nonsignificance (DNS) after we reviewed the environmental checklist and other information on file with us.

We issued this DNS according to state rules.² We will **not act on this proposal for 14 days** from the date we issued the DNS. Agencies, affected tribes, and members of the public are invited to comment on this proposal or DNS. We must receive your comments within 14 days of the date of this letter. This means we must receive your comments by **July 16, 2009**

You can submit your comments by email to SEPAdesk2@dfw.wa.gov, through the WDFW SEPA website comment link at <http://www.wdfw.wa.gov/hab/sepa/sepa.htm>, fax to (360) 902-2946, or mail to the address below. When you send us your comments, please provide the name of the proposal in your comment letter.

Responsible Official: Teresa A. Eturaspe

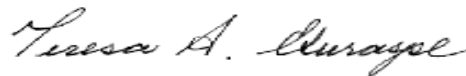
Position/Title: SEPA/NEPA Coordinator, WDFW Regulatory Services Section

Address: 600 Capitol Way North, Olympia, WA 98501-1091

After the comment period closes, applicants may view the updated status of this proposal on the WDFW SEPA website: <http://www.wdfw.wa.gov/hab/sepa/sepa.htm>. Once the status is posted as final, applicants and permittees may take action on the proposal. When a proposal is modified or withdrawn, notice will be given in accordance with state law.¹

If you have questions about this DNS or the details of the proposal, contact Teresa Eturaspe at the address, e-mail, or fax number above; you can also call her at (360) 902-2575.

DATE OF ISSUE: July 2, 2009 **SIGNATURE:**



Footnotes

1. RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c)

2. WAC 197-11-340(2).